TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF VIETNAMESE LABOR MIGRANT WORKERS IN TAIWAN

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Introduction

I am a Vietnamese Roman Catholic Jesuit priest who was sent to Taiwan as a missionary in November 2013. During my time there, I had the privilege of serving at the Jesuit Social Service, Rerum Novarum Center (RNC) as a Chinese language teacher for migrant workers. Our office warmly welcomed individuals from Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Given my own Vietnamese background, I was particularly assigned to meet and assist Vietnamese labor migrants.

Following my ordination as a priest, I extended my ministry to various Vietnamese communities in different parishes, where I would celebrate Mass for them on a weekly basis. Throughout my service, both as a religious brother teaching Chinese and as a priest presiding over the Holy Mass, I had the opportunity to attentively listen to the struggles faced by migrants in Taiwan. I provided a compassionate ear as they shared their hardships, aiming to reassure them of my presence and let them know they were not alone in their journey.

During my time at the RNC, I have witnessed notable transformations in the office's approach, with a focus on enhancing services for impoverished and marginalized migrants. One noteworthy initiative was our annual winter outreach to seaports across Taiwan, where we provided warm clothing

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to seafarers, many of whom hailed from Indonesia and the Philippines.[1] Recognizing that these seafarers often had their passports confiscated by employers to restrict their mobility, we aimed to alleviate their plight by collecting and distributing warm coats. This support was crucial, as without travel documents, they were unable to disembark and purchase basic necessities ashore.

To address the legal challenges faced by exploited migrants, we established a specialized Lawyer's Office within the RNC. This dedicated team offered legal advice and assistance to individuals who had experienced mistreatment or abuse at the hands of their employers. Furthermore, recognizing the immediate need for shelter and security during legal proceedings, we provided housing options or helped migrants find temporary accommodations while awaiting litigation.

These initiatives exemplify the RNC's commitment to advocating for the rights and well-being of migrants, working tirelessly to improve their circumstances and offer practical support in their times of need.

As a Jesuit institution, the center embraced the practice of discernment guided by Ignatian Spirituality, always seeking the "more" (*Magis*) in order to serve migrants, seafaring workers, domestic workers, and the brokers who employ migrants. Some years ago, we embarked on a journey of study, discernment, and exploration to develop a theological vision that could be applied to this evolving situation.

In extending our care to migrants, regardless of their background, the center firmly believed in the imperative to express

1. Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific, "Sending warmth to foreign fishermen in Taiwan," *Chinese Province*, accessed Apr. 22, 2022, https://jcapsj.org/blog/2020/01/10/sending-warmth-to-foreign-fishermen-in-taiwan/.

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love for the least among us. We sought to be the voice for the voiceless, drawing inspiration from the wisdom of Proverbs 31:1-9. We recognized our calling to be advocates for genuine love, for "there is no fear in love. Perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). With these teachings in mind, we aspired to embody perfect love when encountering migrants, following the example set by Jesus in His instruction to "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).

Furthermore, we recognized the importance of setting aside differences and breaking down historical or background barriers in order to genuinely encounter migrants in our daily lives. True love compelled us to embrace inclusivity and transcend all prejudices, understanding the profound truth that "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). Indeed, our Lord manifests Himself in all migrants of our contemporary world. The Jesuit Social Service in Taiwan, including the Rerum Novarum Center, embraces this understanding. We wholeheartedly welcome, protect, promote, and integrate[2] our migrant brothers and sisters, irrespective of their identities and origins. Gender, religion, and cultural differences hold no sway as barriers but rather serve to enrich our lives.

In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis eloquently emphasizes the transformative power of love, which shatters the chains that isolate and divide us, instead fostering the construction of bridges. Love enables us to forge a global family where all can find a sense of belonging. Compassion and dignity emanate from love, as the Pope asserts: "Love exudes compassion and dignity" (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 62). In dealing with the issues faced by migrant workers in Taiwan, we are steadfast

2. Vatican News, "Pope Francis' message for 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees," *Vatican News*, accessed Feb. 02, 2022, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2017-11/pope-message-world-day-of-migrants-and-refugees.html.

in following the teachings of our Jesuit Pope, who guides us in fostering a spirit of solidarity, compassion, and love.

By embracing the call to love unconditionally and recognizing the inherent dignity of all individuals, regardless of their migrant status, we strive to create a society that truly reflects the teachings of Christ and the vision of Pope Francis.

A General Picture of Vietnamese Labor Migrant Workers in Taiwan

Firstly, the issue of "recruitment fees" emerges as a critical aspect impacting Vietnamese labor migrant workers in Taiwan.[3] A research conducted in 2017 reveals that migrant workers often find themselves agreeing to pay exorbitant recruitment fees, surpassing the equivalent of their one-month salary—a practice common in many countries where such fees are permitted.[4] This situation is particularly prevalent for those seeking employment in Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan.

Prospective migrant workers are faced with substantial pre-departure fees, including non-refundable recruitment fees and refundable safety deposits. The safety deposit is intended to dissuade workers from absconding to their destination countries, as it is only refunded upon their return to Vietnam without any record of desertion.

3. Cf. Huynh Tam Sang, "Addressing Challenges Faced by Taiwan's Migrant Workers: The Taiwanese government has not paid sufficient consideration to migrant workers," *The Diplomat*, accessed Apr. 18, 2022, https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/addressing-challenges-faced-by-taiwans-migrant-workers/.

4. Cf. Mauro Testaverde, Harry Moroz, Claire H. Hollweg, and Achim Schmillen, Migrating to Opportunity Overcoming Barriers to Labor Mobility in Southeast Asia, 2017, World Bank Group, accessed Apr 20, 2022, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28342/9781464811067.pdf.

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These findings shed light on the financial burden imposed on Vietnamese labor migrant workers, as they are compelled to bear substantial costs upfront, often exceeding their initial earnings. The practice of charging high recruitment fees coupled with safety deposits reflects a system that seeks to control and restrict workers' mobility, contributing to their vulnerability and limiting their agency.[5]

Understanding the prevalence and impact of these recruitment fees is crucial in comprehending the challenges faced by Vietnamese labor migrant workers in Taiwan. By highlighting this issue, it becomes apparent that addressing the exploitative nature of recruitment practices is essential for improving the well-being and rights of migrant workers.

Secondly, the presence of migrant workers in Taiwan has had a significant impact on Taiwanese society.[6] However, at the onset of this labor migration, negative reports and stereotypes about migrant workers fueled hostile attitudes among many locals. This initial perception was in stark contrast to the reality that these foreign workers were filling the demanding 3Ds jobs that the majority of Taiwanese citizens were unwilling to undertake.

Regrettably, previous studies and reports on Taiwanese migrant workers have often overlooked their subjective perspectives and experiences. Local newspapers and a significant portion of the populace tended to view them solely as

5. Daniele Belanger, Kayoko Ueno, Thu Hong Khuat, Emiko Ochiai, "From Foreign Trainees to Unauthorized Workers: Vietnamese Migrant Workers in Japan," *Sage Journal* (2011), accessed Apr. 18, 2022, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/011719681102000102?download=true.

6. Cf. Tam Sang, "Addressing Challenges Faced by Taiwan's Migrant Workers, *The Diplomat*, accessed Apr 18, 2022, https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/addressing-challenges-faced-by-taiwans-migrant-workers.

carriers of disease and representatives of uncleanliness. The contributions made by migrant workers to Taiwanese society were largely overlooked, as highlighted by Hsin-I Cheng, who found that out of 506 news articles on migrant workers, only five mentioned their positive contributions.[7]

These findings reveal a significant disconnect between the lived experiences of migrant workers and the perceptions held by the Taiwanese public. The negative portrayal of migrant workers in the media and the general lack of recognition of their contributions perpetuated a narrative that further marginalized and devalued their presence in Taiwanese society.

Recognizing and challenging these negative stereotypes is crucial in fostering a more inclusive and empathetic society. Highlighting the significant contributions made by migrant workers, as well as promoting a deeper understanding of their experiences, can help shift public attitudes and perceptions. By acknowledging their role in filling essential jobs and their positive impact on Taiwanese society, a more balanced and appreciative narrative can emerge, fostering a more harmonious coexistence between migrant workers and the local community.

In addition to the challenges faced by migrant workers in Taiwan, such as negative perceptions and limited recognition of their contributions, the burden of exorbitant recruitment fees further exacerbates their plight. These high fees create immense debt for migrant workers, leaving them financially constrained and unable to terminate their employment contracts even in cases of contract violations. Rather than protecting their rights, existing policies often restrict their options and reinforce an unequal power dynamic between

7. Hsin-I Cheng, "On Migrant Workers' Social Status in Taiwan: A Critical Analysis of Mainstream News Discourse," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016), accessed Apr 18, 2022, https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/3905.

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employers and workers. It is crucial to establish a labor relationship based on mutual agreement, moving away from the exploitative master-slave dynamic that has led to an increase in domestic workers fleeing ineffective policies.[8]

Despite warnings and punitive measures against mistreatment, a "blind eye" bilateral policy between the governments of Vietnam and Taiwan allows some instances of mistreatment to persist.[9] While Taiwan permits the employment of migrant workers to address labor shortages, flawed policies contribute to human rights violations and the emergence of a significant number of runaways. This phenomenon not only poses a social problem within Taiwan but also affects the home countries of migrant workers, including Vietnam, attracting international attention.

Several factors contribute to the plight of migrant workers in Taiwan, including economic challenges, poor working conditions, restrictions on the right to transfer to new employers, and pressure to return to their home countries. Research by Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A. Becker suggests that the degree of cultural differences plays a role in determining the likelihood of migrant workers fleeing their employment.[10]

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8. Cf. Piyasiri Wickramasekara et al., "Something is Better than Nothing Enhancing the protection of Indian migrant workers through Bilateral Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding," *Migration Forum in Asia* (2012), accessed Apr. 18, 2022, http://mfasia.org/migrantforumasia/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/FINALFormat_Wickramasekara_MOUs%5EFeb2012_V4.pd.

9. Cf. Susan Meiselas, "Swept Under the Rug: Domestic Workers Abused Worldwide," *Human Rights Watch*, accessed Apr 18, 2022, https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/07/27/swept-under-rug/abuses-against-domestic-workers-around-world.

10. Cf. Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A Becker, "Migration, Cultural Bereavement and Cultural Identity," *Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association* (2005): 18-24, accessed Aug. 04, 2022, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1414713/.

When faced with significant cultural differences, workers may fear difficulties in adapting to their new environment and tend to remain within their legal employment. Conversely, if the cultural differences are minimal, workers can adapt more easily. However, if their current working conditions are substandard compared to available opportunities, they are more likely to choose to leave.

Addressing the plight of migrant workers requires comprehensive measures that tackle the systemic issues they face. This includes reforming recruitment practices, ensuring fair labor relationships, protecting workers' rights, and addressing the cultural and social factors that contribute to their vulnerability.

Thirdly, it is important to acknowledge the contradictory treatment of migrant workers in Taiwan. While they serve as a remedy for the labor shortage,[11] their invaluable contributions to the nation's development are often overlooked. Instead of recognizing their efforts, many Taiwanese perceive these foreign blue-collar workers as a social threat. Research sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology of Taiwan indicates that migrant workers are viewed as "complimentary labor forces" rather than fully recognized as essential foreign workers. Despite this, an increase in research from various perspectives has shed light on the comprehensive range of issues faced by migrant workers and their impact on Taiwanese society.

11. Cf. JianBang-Deng, "Labor migration from Southeast Asia to Taiwan: issues, public responses and future development," *Asian Education and Development Studies* (2020), accessed May 26, 2022, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341493857_Labor_migration_from_Southeast_Asia_to_Taiwan_issues_public_responses_and_future_development.

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This research has provided a more nuanced understanding of the challenges migrant workers encounter and their effects on various aspects of Taiwanese society. It has helped to paint a clearer picture of the problems and complexities surrounding their treatment, including the social biases and negative perceptions that persist. By examining the multifaceted dimensions of their experiences, researchers have been able to identify the systemic issues that contribute to their vulnerable position and advocate for meaningful change.

Efforts to bridge the gap between perception and reality, and to recognize the significant contributions of migrant workers, are crucial for fostering a more inclusive and equitable society in Taiwan. By highlighting the positive impact of migrant workers and challenging negative stereotypes, it is possible to shift the narrative and promote a more just and respectful treatment of these individuals who play a vital role in the nation's labor force.

These are my overall impressions of Vietnamese migrant laborers in Taiwan. Vietnamese labor migrants choose to migrate to Taiwan primarily due to economic disparities between the two countries.[12] Their decision to seek employment opportunities in Taiwan reflects the complex reality of economic-driven migration and raises important questions about how we perceive and address the inequalities and differences between migrant workers and the local population.

The challenges faced by economically driven Vietnamese labor migrants in Taiwan encompass various aspects, including official policies, living conditions, and health, with a particular

12. Through interviews with Vietnamese migrant workers in Taiwan, I have seen that they come to Taiwan just because they are poor; the economy in Taiwan is better than in Vietnam. Most of migrant workers I interviewed said that they wanted to come back Taiwan, even the coming back put them in the state of being illegal.

focus on psychological well-being. Official policies related to migrant labor can often be restrictive and fail to adequately address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of this migrant population. Moreover, the living conditions experienced by Vietnamese labor migrants may be substandard, further exacerbating their challenges and limiting their quality of life.

It is also essential to consider the health issues faced by Vietnamese migrant laborers, including psychological ailments. The migration process itself, along with the demanding working conditions and the experience of being far away from home, can contribute to mental health issues among migrant workers. The lack of social support networks and cultural unfamiliarity may further exacerbate their psychological well-being.

Understanding and addressing these challenges require a comprehensive approach that involves policymakers, employers, civil society organizations, and the broader society. Efforts should be made to develop inclusive policies that protect the rights and dignity of migrant workers, promote safe and healthy working environments, and provide support services to address their specific needs. It is important to recognize the humanity of Vietnamese labor migrants and acknowledge the inequalities they face, striving for a more just and equitable society that values the contributions and well-being of all its members, regardless of their national origin.

From my perspective, supported by a video clip highlighting the experiences of migrant workers in Taiwan,[13] it becomes evident that Vietnamese labor migrants face significant challenges in navigating the complex labor migration system,

13. "Recruitment of Women Migrant Workers in Taiwan," accessed July 28, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui6EIWiiCJc&pp=ygVBcmVjcnVpdG1lbnQgb2Ygd29tZW4gbWlncmFudCB3b3JrZXJzIHJlc3BvbnNpYmxlIHJlY3J1aXRtZW50IDIwMjI%3D.

particularly in relation to recruitment processes. Due to a lack of understanding about the intricacies of the system, many Vietnamese workers find themselves trapped in situations where they are burdened with exorbitant recruitment fees and subjected to restrictive guest worker policies.[14]

These unfavorable circumstances often push them towards desperate measures, including attempting to escape from their employment. The accumulation of substantial debts for recruitment fees and the limitations imposed by guest worker policies contribute to their vulnerability and create a sense of powerlessness. Chin-Ju-Lin's research highlights that, apart from the financial motivation to support their families and fulfill their personal aspirations, these workers experience societal disadvantages and discrimination based on their nationality.[15]

Biblical Reflection on the Plight of Vietnamese Labor Migrant Workers in Taiwan

Why am I required to be kind to others? Why must I treat them with respect? Why must I include "they" in "we" and love them as I do myself? How can I claim to love God while refusing to love strangers? Almost every book of the Bible explicitly or implicitly explores the interconnected themes of travel, alienation, and encountering strangers. The prevalence of migration themes can be attributed to the fact that God's people frequently wandered or were exiled to foreign lands.

14. Cf. Vu Le Toan Khoa, "Outlaws On The Jade Island: Runaway Vietnamese Migrant Workers In Taiwan," *JATI-Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 24 no.1 (2019): 151-172, accessed Jun 18, 2022, https://jati.um.edu.my/index.php/jati/article/view/18672.

15. Cf. Chin-Ju Lin, "Filipina Domestic Workers in Taiwan: Structural Constraints and Personal Resistance," Taiwan Grassroots Women Workers' Center, accessed Jun 20, 2022, http://chinju.dlearn.kmu.edu.tw/pwithublication/6-1.pdf.

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By narrating human reality, biblical emigrational stories confirm that Vietnamese labor migrant workers in Taiwan, like Abraham and Jesus, are foreigners and sojourners. They pray to God for assistance as they travel to their destination.[16] Jacqueline Hagan discovered that greater than three-quarters of her sample prayed to God, a saint, or a religious icon, or sought advice from trusted local clergy, in order to make the decision to migrate.[17] Priests also provided "religious sanction for the migration, a kind of spiritual travel permit that has huge symbolic value."[18] Daniel Groody observes that "immigrants speak spontaneously of a spirituality of sacrifice, a spirituality of the desert, and a spirituality of the cross."[19] Because He is always "I am," God promises to protect them on the way they go. We also recall numerous biblical figures whose names are associated with migrations. In this section, the researcher will discuss the migration experiences of Abram in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament, as well as how the Old Testament established laws to protect strangers and sojourners. These rules describe how to extend hospitality to Vietnamese migrant workers in accordance with God's will. Taiwanese Christians are called to express their consolidation and hospitality to these marginalized people. Undoubtedly,

16. "Hear my prayer, Lord, listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping. I dwell with you as a foreigner, a stranger, as all my ancestors were." (Psalm 39:12). All Bible verses or sentences in this paper are taken from The Catholic Study Bible, *New American Bible,* including the Revised Psalms and the Revised New Testament, translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources (Oxford University Press, Inc., 1990).

17. Jacqueline Hagan, "Faith for the Journey: Religion as a Resource for Migrants," *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration,* eds. Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 2008), 14.

18. Ibid., 7-8.

19. Ibid., 14.

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people all have an emigrational DNA[20] that they inherited from their God, *Deus Migrator.*[21]

Old Testament

Abram-Go Forth (Gen 12 – 25)

In Genesis, chapters 12 through 25, readers are introduced to the account of Abram's life, beginning with his migration from Ur in southern Mesopotamia to Harran, which is located on the southeastern edge of modern-day Turkey near the Syrian border. From there, he journeyed with his extended family to the land of Canaan and then to the Negev in the south.[22] From these narratives, we recognize that Abram never settled down. He was a wanderer, a sojourner[23], and his walk with God was of one always on the move.

> The Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk, and from your father's house to a land that I will show you."[24]

George Arthur Buttrick stated, "the glory of human history is in its pioneers. Pioneer is defined by Webster as 'one who goes before, as into the wilderness, preparing the way for others to

20. Cf. Father Peter Phan: Migration and Theology, accessed Sept. 25, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B79oEzelxho. We also see in Gen 1:27: "So God creates man and woman in His own image."

21. Cf. Peter C. Phan, Deus Migrator—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration, *Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2016): 24.

22. Cf. E. A. Speiser, *The Anchor Bible - Genesis* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1964), 86 – 88.

23. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author said that Abram sojourned "as in a foreign land, living in tents," (Heb 11:9).

24. Gen 12:1.

follow.'[25] The pioneer may be motivated by various passive or active factors. Whatever propels him forward, he is frequently a creative force in the course of human history. In this sense, Abraham is a pioneer, but more than a pioneer."[26] Why was Abraham a more-than-pioneer? That is because he responded to an imperative call of God to lead his people out of a world of chaos, of instability, of barrenness to the "promised land". Yes, that Abram, a more-than-pioneer, led the group of this nomad clans from the desert to the "land flowing with milk and honey" echoes the story of migrants[27] nowadays. The migrants today through their social web[28] of their fellow man/woman or by or pioneer in their group choose to flee from their chaotic worlds to other stable, fruitful worlds. They do so just because they want to respond to a divine mission – "go forth". Today's migrants choose to flee from their chaotic worlds to another stable, fruitful world (or that's what they thought before) through the social network of their fellow man or woman or a pioneer in their group. They do so because they desire to fulfill a divine mandate – "go forth." Indeed, Vietnamese labor migrants are obligated to seek out greener pastures in order to provide for their families.

25. George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), 570-571.

26. Ibid.

27. International Organization for Migration, "Who is a Migrant?", accessed Oct. 12, 2022, https://www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant.

28. Cf. Lucia Kurekova, "Theories of Migration: Critical Review in the Context of the Eu East-West Flows," Best Participant Essays Series, 9-10 (2009) accessed Oct. 10, 2022, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228279066_Theories_of_Migration_Critical_Review_in_the_Context_of_the_EU_East-West_Flows.

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Abram-Belief

The imperative commandment that God gave to Abram was followed with five promises:

> I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great; so that you will be a blessing; I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you." Abram went as the Lord directed him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.[29]

Today's Vietnamese labor migrant workers have the same experiences as Abram. Once they arrive in this "promised land," they will realize Taiwan is not a "land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8). They frequently daydream about the promised lands, where they anticipate finding greener pastures. They set out to accomplish their goals. On their journey, they encounter a variety of obstacles frequently. Sometimes they face a border patrol and sometimes they face gangs (human trafficking), but the most serious problem in Taiwan is brokerage. They are unable to reach their destination, but they never lose faith. If they maintain optimism, another opportunity will present itself.[30] They do so because they believe there will always be a God behind them, one who gives them promises: promises of prosperity![31]

29 Gen 12:2-4.

30 "Riding 'The Death Train' to America's border," accessed Oct 27, 2022, https://www.yout.ube.com/watch?v=RSwwO00qeB0.

31. Cf. Jacqueline Hagan, "Faith for the Journey, Religion as a Resource for Migrants," in *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, eds. Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame, 2008), 3-19.

Abram-Blessing

In the narration, God said to Abram "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."[32] God commanded Abram not only to go to the land He had promised to give him, but also to bless the people. God wants Abram or the Israelites to "go forth" on another "Missio Dei" in order to receive and bestow blessings.

The vocabulary of blessing[33] in Hebrew, despite the weakening the word has undergone in our language, is derived from a single root *brk* possibly related to knee and adoration and serves to designate all forms and levels of blessing. Blessing is both a given and a gift, and the formulation of this gift consists of three Hebrew words: the noun *beraka,* the verb *barak*, and the adjective *baruk*.

Beraka-Blessing

Even in its most profane form, its most material sense, that of gift, the word blessing carries a very discernible human interaction nuance. The term 'blessing' conjures up images of pious prosperity, but also of generosity to the unfortunate, and it is always the result of God's goodness.

Barak-To bless

The verb lends itself to a vast array of applications, ranging from the standard street greeting to the customary expression of courtesy. God blesses humanity, but humanity can also bless God.

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32. Gen 12:2.

33. Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), 48-51.

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Baruk-Blessed

This is the most powerful of all words of blessing. The formula "Blessed be N..." is pronounced as a cry before a person to whom God has recently revealed His power and generosity and whom He has chosen "among all."

Inferred from the terminology of *brk* – blessing/to bless/ blessed is the function of migrants in their emigrational lives. Regardless of their religion or status, they are to be a blessing to those with whom they share a home: in their profession of faith and worship, as well as in the exchanges of daily life. This call extends to the settled as well as the nationals, for all people are sojourners and strangers who are to be and become a blessing to the world.

As Vietnamese migrant workers, they are a boon to themselves, their families, and the host nations.[34] By sending remittances back to their families, they bestow their blessing upon them. The remittances can help those left behind live a better life and improve their children's education by sending them to reputable schools. Moreover, this action can help the Vietnamese economy recover from its current state, as IOM says: "On one hand, countries of origin benefit from labor migration because it relieves unemployment pressures and contributes to development through remittances, knowledge transfer, and the creation of business and trade networks."[35] In addition, the nation's status could change from underdeveloped to developing. This is because migrant workers' remittances and labor skills can benefit the education systems of their

34. Xpress Money, "How Immigrants Benefit the Host Economy," accessed Oct. 04, 2022, https://www.xpressmoney.com/blog/industry/how-immigrants-benefit-the-host-economy/.

35. International Organization for Migration, "Labour Migration & Health," accessed Oct. 04, 2022, https://www.iom.int/labour-migration-health.

home countries. Occasionally, the contribution of "Vietnamese migrant force labor" "blesses" Taiwan's economy.

In addition to receiving nations, migrants can help share the burden of 3-D jobs (Dirty, Dangerous and Demeaning) that citizens of these nations fear to accept.[36] Indeed, the economy of the receiving countries is "blessed" by the contribution of migrant force labor. For example, in numerous ways, immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy. In some industries, they constitute more than a third of the labor force and have high employment rates. Their geographic mobility enables local economies to respond to labor shortages, thereby smoothing out hiccups that would otherwise weaken the economy. Increasing the number of workers relative to retirees and bolstering the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, immigrant labor helps support the aging native-born population. And children born to immigrant families are upwardly mobile, which promises future benefits not only for their families but also for the U.S. economy as a whole.[37] The host nation is able to acquire low-cost skilled labor. In the case of physicians, nurses, computer engineers, etc., European and American nations can hire individuals from India, the Philippines, China, etc., who are paid less but are more effective than local candidates. In

36. International Labour Organization (ILO), accessed Oct 04, 2022, "Access to Justice for Migrant Workers in South-East Asia," https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/.

37. Ref. Arloc Sherman, Danilo Trisi, Chad Stone, Shelby Gonzales And Sharon Parrott, "Immigrants Contribute Greatly to U.S. Economy, Despite Administration's 'Public Charge' Rule Rationale," *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, 2019, accessed Oct. 04, 2022. https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/immigrants-contribute-greatly-to-us-economy-despite-administrations.

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some cases, qualified labor migrant workers can fill skill gaps in their host countries.[38]

In Taiwan, the development of a multiethnic society between cultures flourishes in addition to the financial resources or economy that migrants contribute to the individuals regarded.[39] There are numerous ethnic retail stores, ethnic foods, and ethnic services in host countries, such as Little Saigon, China Town, and Korean Town in the United States and elsewhere.[40] Eventually, interactions occur between the majority cultures of host countries and the minority cultures of migrants. These cultural interactions are evidence of the blessing and blessing that God intends for humankind to bestow upon one another.

Overall, blessing is a central theme of the narrative.[41] It has various effects on the lives of both Taiwanese and Vietnamese labor migrant workers. Existing individuals are influenced by God's blessing. It is concerned with the tangible manifestations of material prosperity, the economy, and culture from a spiritual standpoint. It is absolutely accurate to quote Pope Francis: "When we apply this perspective to migrants and refugees, we find that they do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy, and aspirations along with the treasures of their own cultures, enriching the lives of the nations that welcome them. We also witness the ingenu-

38. Settling in 2018, "Indicators of Immigrant Integration", *OECD iLibrary*, (2018), accessed Oct. 10, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264307216-en.

39. Henri Giordan, "Multicultural and Multi-ethnic Societies," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 4, (1994), accessed Aug. 10, 2022, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000111561.

40. Population Reference Bureau, "America's Racial and Ethnic Minorities," Esource Library (1999), accessed Oct. 05, 2022, https://www.prb.org/americasracialandethnicminorities/.

41. Leander E. Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 1 (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1994), 425.

ity, tenacity, and willingness to sacrifice of the innumerable individuals, families, and communities around the world who open their doors and hearts to migrants and refugees despite scarce resources."[42]

Abram–Trickery (cf. Gen 12:10-20)

Abram's departure from the Promised Land due to the threat of famine was depicted in the story. He and his wife traveled to Egypt. Concerned that his beautiful wife could become a formidable obstacle, he deceived the ruthless Pharaoh using a deception. His wife was instructed to refer to herself as his sister. According to E.A. Speiser, the topic "wife-sister" has generated countless comments. In Hurrian society, marriage bonds were strongest and most sacred when the wife had the legal status of a sister, regardless of actual blood ties."[43] Regardless of the comment or compliment, it is evident that Abram lied. Life-threatening circumstances caused him to lie. Due to the hopelessness of the situation, Abram "acted in an unprincipled manner, even endangering Sarah in order to save himself."[44]

Abram's story is the story of today's Vietnamese labor migrant workers in Taiwan, who must deceive Taiwan's unjust systems in order to enter the "promised land" and escape the "famine" in Vietnam. In any case, their precarious

42. Vatican News, "Pope's message for 2018 World Day of Peace is released," 2017, accessed Oct 05, 2022, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2017-11/pope-s-message-for-2018-world-day-of-peace-is-released.html.

43. E.A.Speiser, *Genesis – Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 92.

44. Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis – Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 128.

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circumstance frequently leads to yet another precarious circumstance. In *FT*, Pope Francis says,

> There is at times a tendency to deliberately fabricate enemies: stereotyped figures who represent all the characteristics that society perceives or interprets as threatening... This has made all the more dangerous the growing practice in some countries of resorting to preventive custody, imprisonment without trial and especially the death penalty."[45]

Vietnamese labor migrant workers in Taiwan, because of being stereotyped, threatened of being custodies, and so on have to subterfuge by all kinds of tricks.[46] Similar to Abram's situation, the trick could be discovered and become more dangerous. Nevertheless, the God of Mercy, the "Always Is or Am" One, always appears to save the helpless. The Law He gave to Israel reveals His ever-present presence.

Old Testament Law to Protect the *Ger*

Typically, ger is translated as "sojourner", "alien", or "foreigner" or "stranger". These terms appear in both masculine and feminine forms, but ger is always masculine in its nearly one hundred instances. Ger is predominantly singular (81 occurrences) and refers to an unnamed person in 61 instances in legal texts, primarily in the book of Deuteronomy (20 times). Its occurrence in biblical legal writings is distinctive because "alien" or "stranger" are not listed among the protected individuals in any other ancient Near Eastern legal code. Its occurrence in biblical legal writings is distinctive because "alien" or

45. *FT*, no. 266.

46. Marco Funk, "Trickery in Dublin's Shadow," *Forced Migration Review* (2016), accessed Oct. 06, 2022, https://www.fmreview.org/destination-europe/funk.

"stranger" are not listed among the protected individuals in any other ancient Near Eastern legal code.

Although God promised Abram that He would give this land to his descendants, the Promised Land that he and his descendants received was actually a place where sojourners were welcome.[47] That is because God is a true owner of the land, the Israelites are the *ger* of God, and therefore they are only the tenant of the land or His guest[48]. Since the Israelites are always the *ger* of God, eventually, God always wants them to treat other *ger* as God treats them. We can see the law of treating the *ger* in Deuteronomy "Thou Shalt Not Oppress the *Ger*"[49]. The law can be explained as follows.

The legislation characterized to aid the vulnerable *ger* group in a sense of welcoming and compassion.[50] In fact, Israel's legal treatment of the ger is unprecedented among ancient legal codes. The law expresses concern for the ger in Lv 19:34: "You shall treat the alien who resides with you the same as the native-born among you; have the same love for him as you have for yourself." The Israelites fulfill Leviticus 19:18, which instructs them to love their neighbor, by obeying the commandment to "love the *ger*." Indeed, for Abram's descendants, the best indicator of their willingness to love their neighbor is their affection for the *ger*.[51]

Eventually, what the Israelites do to protect the vulnerable *ger* group from the social pressure makes us recognize the

47. Cf. Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), 584.

48. Cf. Ps.15.

49. Ex 22:21.

50. Cf. William H.E. Propp, *Exodus 19-40, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 258.

51. Cf. George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), 1007.

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Merciful God. For instance, to prevent bias in the legal system, the law mandated that sojourners be treated impartially in legal proceedings (Dt 1:16–17; 24:17– 18; 27:19). Their labor was not to be exploited, and they were to be compensated fairly and promptly (Ex 23:12; Dt 24:14–15). In addition, they were permitted to rest on the Sabbath (Ex 20:10; Deut 5:14) etc...[52] God's mercy was consistently extended to the *ger*, the wretched condition of Israel's weak and helpless. He desires that those who seek to love Him also seek to love all mankind. The attitude of hospitality toward the *ger*, which is also found in the Bible, is a manifestation of love.

In his recent encyclical *FT*, Pope Francis explains who *Ger* is in contemporary society. According to him, these individuals are "frequently attracted to Western culture with inflated expectations, leaving them vulnerable to severe disappointments." Unscrupulous traffickers, frequently affiliated with drug cartels or arms cartels, prey on the vulnerability of migrants, who endure violence, trafficking, psychological and physical abuse, and unimaginable sufferings on their journey. Those who emigrate frequently experience uprooting and separation from their native culture and religion. Fragmentation is also experienced by the communities and families they leave behind, especially when one or both parents migrate and leave their children in their native country.[53]

Hospitality to the Foreigner

When the Israelites extended hospitality to the ger, they simultaneously recalled their former status as a ger before God or as a traveler on earth[54]: "Look away from me, that I may

52. Cf. Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 584.

53. Cf. *FT*, no. 38.

54. Cf. Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 243.

enjoy life again before I depart and am no more."[55] The ger required the same level of adoration as the Israelites showed God. Surely, the Israelites' affection for the ger stems from their devotion to God. Abram's example of hospitality towards unexpected guests exemplifies generosity.[56]

In Gen. 18: 1-8, the first instance of Abraham's hospitality is described. Consider Abraham's actions to see how his hospitality extends to uninvited guests, as though we were inside his tent. During the heat of the day, he observed their approach from the entrance of his tent. This figure resembles the refugees who emerge from their hardships today. Abraham then ran to meet them, honored them, and extended an invitation. His extraordinary hospitality revived them; he prepared and served them food. He did his best for the guests, was concerned about their circumstances, and traveled with them. This example of hospitality is instructive for natives as they welcome their unwelcome guests, *ger*, the labor migrants.

Abraham's hospitality towards the *ger* can serve as a model for how the nationals treat the *ger.* According to Walter A. Vogels, Abraham's guests were unanticipated, uninvited, and unknown travelers; therefore, hospitality entails transforming them into guests.[57] Yes, Abraham made them his guests through his wholehearted hospitality and treatment of God's sojourners in the *ger.* The manner in which Abraham greeted sojourners is echoed in the recent *FT.*

Pope Francis, in *FT*, encourage people "to create a different culture, in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one

55. Ps 39:13.

56. Cf. Gen 18:1-8.

57. Walter A. Vogels, "Hospitality in Biblical Perspective," in *Liturgical Ministry* 11 (Fall 2002): 164, accessed Sept. 29, 2022, https://www.scribd.com/docment/372733483/Hospitality-in-Biblical-Perspective.

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another,"[58] and to gradually expand the boundaries of love.[59] Overall, according to Pope Francis, "love does not care if a brother or sister in need comes from one place or another, love...builds bridges. Love enables us to create one great family, where all of us can feel at home;"[60] love keeps us far from being indifferent to suffering of others; love does not allow anyone to go through someone's life as an outcast[61]; love "leaves no room for ideological manipulation and challenges us to expand our frontiers. It gives a universal dimension to our call to love, one that transcends all prejudices, all historical and cultural barriers, all petty interests."[62] Yes, only by expressing our hospitality like Abraham did, we are able to build a different culture, a culture of love, a culture which Pope Francis unceasingly calls, "culture of encounter."[63]

The narrative of Abraham is characterized by the numerous obstacles similar to those encountered by Vietnamese labor migrant workers in their pursuit of better lives. The narration reveals an enduring desire for the "Promised Land," a place where people can find their place, feel safe, and construct bridges rather than walls.[64] Therefore, Vietnamese labor migrant workers' daily lives are characterized by their ability to be "*ger*" and "at home" in any country. They hope that wherever they go, the places they visit will resemble the

58. Cf. *FT*, no. 57.

59. Ibid., no. 59.

60. Ibid., no. 62.

61. Ibid., no. 68.

62. Ibid., no. 83.

63. Cf. Pope Francis, "For A Culture Of Encounter," *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, (2016), accessed Oct. 13, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2016/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20160913_for-a-culture-of-encounter.html.

64. Cf. *FT*, no. 27.

country they abandoned. These migrants have no difficulty heeding the call to "go forth" or adjusting to life in a foreign land. The problem arises when nationals reject a migrant's desire to integrate with them.[65] In the eyes of Taiwanese citizens, Vietnamese migrant workers are always considered outsiders. They object translating "them" into "us or we-ness". Vietnamese labor migrant workers are somehow like Abraham who lived an outsider, a stranger in a foreign land. Abraham was a prefiguration of Jesus who also was not considered an outsider, a stranger in his hometown, and was rejected by his own people.

New Testament

"The phenomenon of human mobility evokes the very image of the Church, a pilgrim people on earth who is perpetually en route to her heavenly homeland."[66] Moreover, the way to lead people back to heaven is the way of the Cross, the center of Christian Revelation.[67] In addition, Aloysius Pieris emphasized the significance of tying the cross and resurrection to baptism in the Christian life. Jesus was baptized into Israel's spirituality at the Jordan River with John, according to the gospel of Mark. Jesus was re-baptized on the cross into the historical suffering of the oppressed."[68] Let us move to the message of the Gospel

65. Ibid., no. 39.

66. Pope John Paul II, *Message for World Migration Day*, 1998, Messages, 1998, accessed Oct 19, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_09111997_world-%20migration-day-1998.html.

67 .Cf. Alan Smith, "The Cross is at the Center," *Cruciform Church of Christ*, 2019, accessed Oct 19, 2022, https://www.cruciformcoc.com/sermons/the-cross-is-at-the-center/.

68. A. Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (N.Y: Orbis, Maryknoll, 1988), 45-50.

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where we can see our Lord, Christ died "outside the gate,"[69] rejected by his own people. Nevertheless, he rose and gave His people life. Vietnamese migrant laborers follow Christ's example when they make sacrifices for their families in order to give their children hope for the future.

"And The Word Became Flesh and Made His Dwelling Among Us" (Jn 1:14)

In an article of Christopher Magezi,[70] he criticized Daniel Groody about his conceptualization related to the Incarnation. I will use the Christopher Magezi's ideas to assert that anhypostatic and enhypostatic are applicable to Groody's theory. In addition, according to Peter C. Phan, Jesus of Nazareth is the ideal imago *Dei Migratoris*, God the Migrant, and the "exact imprint of God's very being" as a migrant.[71] In addition, according to Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, "through Jesus, God enters the broken and sinful terrain of the human condition in order to help men and women who have become lost during their time on earth find their way back to God" (Jn 13:1-3).[72] From this perspective, the incarnation is the great

69. Heb 13:12.

70. Christopher Magezi, "A Critical Assessment of Daniel Groody's Conceptualization of the Incarnation and Its Implication in Challenging the Church to Embrace and Respond to Migrants' Needs," *AOSIS Publishing,* vol.54, no.1 (2020), accessed Oct. 19, 2022, https://indieskriflig.org.za/index.php/skriflig/article/view/2627/6665.

71. Peter C. Phan, "Embracing, protecting, and Loving the Stranger: A Roman Catholic Theology of Migration," *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions,* eds. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2014), 100.

72. Jill Marie Gerschutz, "Integration Yesterday and Today: New Challenges for the United States and the Church," *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, eds. Donald Kerwin, and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 123-37.

migration of human history: God's loving movement toward humanity makes humanity's return to God possible.[73]

Groody used anhypostatic and enhypostatic thinking by Karl Barth to describe the exaltation of the Son of Man. These two concepts are used to describe the unique ontological nature of Christ's humanity as the God-man. Similar to Barth's interpretation, Groody saw in the two concepts that "Christ identifies with all people through his incarnation."[74] Moreover, the two concepts "illustrate the relationship between the divine and human natures in Christ's person."[75] Grounded in the anhypostasis and enhypostasis, we can see the person of Jesus Christ, "not in the static being of very God and very man"[76] but in the event of God's movement towards humanity.

In fact, through Jesus of Nazareth's revelation, the Son of Man is united with the Son of God. Jesus Christ, the fully human deity of humans, is now also the deity of migrants. In submission to the Father, as Jesus of Nazareth, he emptied himself and assumed the lowliness of humanity. He reveals to us the desire of his benevolent Father to elevate humanity as adopted children, God's children "God, in the person of Jesus Christ, loved the world so much that he migrated into the sinful and broken existence of humanity from his homeland. On the cross, he sacrificed himself so that we could be reconciled with God

73. Cf. Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C., "Catholic Social Teaching and Migration: Perspectives from the US-Mexico Border," *Review: Pensamiento Social, Instituto de Estudios Social Cristianos, Lima*, no.1, (2013): 41-50, accessed Oct. 15, 2022, https://ordosocialis.de/wp-content/uploads/Catholic_Social_Teaching_and_Migration.pdf.

74. Ibid., 45.

75. Ibid., 46.

76. Ibid., 46.

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and return to our homeland."[77] He accepted being his people's impure and rejected Mestizo.[78]Alternatively, from the image of the *Liminal*, the condition of marginalization, yet He can *communitas* among people.[79] From the role of *Mestizo* or *Liminal*, the reconciliation of Jesus Christ of Nazareth has brought us back to our homeland where there is "peace, harmony, justice, and life."[80]

"Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth?" (Jn 1:46)

Can anything positive originate in Nazareth? Nathanael despised the birthplace of Jesus.

He was skeptical that the Messiah would emerge from a city he knew so well. Regardless, conflicts between municipalities and villages were prevalent in Israeli society. Jesus' "Nazarene" ancestry infuriated Jewish elites, who disregarded his inferior ancestry.[81] In addition, non-Jewish audiences of John may have known nothing about Nazareth other than what they had heard in other Jesus stories. Why would John inform them of this negative assessment of Nazareth if they were likely unaware of it? John assumes that even those hearing his Gospel for the first time will have heard the verses preceding this one, regardless of what his audience already knew about Galilean villages.

77. Cf. Daniel G. Groody, "A Theology of Migration: A New Method for Understanding a God on the Move," *America: The Jesuit Review*, 3-4 (2011), accessed Oct. 18, 2022, https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/763/article/theology-migration.

78. Virgilio Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise* (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), 51.

79. Cf. Sang Hyun Lee, *From A Liminal Place: An Asian American Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 68-73.

80. Cf. Groody, "A Theology of Migration, 3-4.

81. There are numerous examples of this in John 7:41-42; 7:52; 18:5-7; 19:19 and Acts 6:14; 24:5.

Jesus is not only from Nazareth, but also from God, according to John (cf. John 1:1-18; 1: 29-34). Jesus may have been born in a humble village, but he is far more significant as the king of all Israel (cf. John 1:49; 12:13). In John's theology, the most significant "geographic" context for Jesus is not a Galilean village, but rather the fact that he is from God (John 1:29-34) and is a bridge between heaven and earth (John 1:51). Philip's assertion that he had found the one about whom Moses and the prophets wrote prompted Nathanael's contempt for Nazareth (John 1:45). This saying can be understood by John's audience in light of the Gospel's proclamation that "while the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn 1:17).[82]

Come and see, Philip replies to Nathanael's contempt (John 1:46). These words echo the words Jesus spoke to his disciples in John 1:39: "Come, and see." John considers the phrase "come and see" to be an invitation to strangers.[83] Certainly, interacting with strangers can result in new life.[84] Eventually, this invitation is echoed when we see the migrant workers' contribution to Taiwan's economy.[85] Despite being reviled, xenophobic, and discriminated against, migrant workers make substantial contributions to the economies of both the host country and their home countries. "Come and See" those who are despised and carrying out the work of Jesus of Nazareth in the mountains, bathrooms, ships, etc. In his work, Jesus of Nazareth represents these migrants. The migrant works

82. Cf. George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952), 444.

83. Cf. Susanna Snyder, *Asylum-Seeking, Migration and Church* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2012), 174.

84. Cf. Ibid., 175.

85. **新聞與活動**, "移民和移工都是我們臺灣的一份子," 總統府新聞, accessed Oct. 18, 2022, https://www.president.gov.tw/NEWS/20973.

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nonstop to support his family in his home country. So that his children can attend school and his wife can raise pigs or chickens to provide for the family, he performs difficult labor and earns very little money. Despite this, "Jesus of Nazareth" continues to be ridiculed by the people of his time because of his Nazareth origin.

Rejection at Nazareth

In the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6; and Luke 4:16-30), the story of Jesus' return to his hometown scandalized his contemporaries due to his origin. People inquired, "Is this not the carpenter, Mary's son?" Even his neighbors held a contemptuous view of Jesus. They refused to accept a person they knew well who had become famous. Indeed, the Gospel of John reveals how his people rejected him. "He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him."[86]

Residents of Nazareth acknowledged the brilliance of Jesus' teaching and his "mighty deeds," yet they rejected him! According to the Hebrew Scriptures, Nazareth was an insignificant village, so they rejected him. In addition, the Nazarenes placed a high value on self-respect, and they did not want Jesus to achieve fame. In Taiwan, migrant workers are required to relinquish their belongings in order to begin a new life in a distant land where they have no prior claims. Many Taiwanese, however, reject migrant workers because they believe that these outsiders destabilize their society. Because of this biased attitude of employers, migrant workers are more often at risk. Even though Taiwanese offer the opportunity for a secure employment, being a foreigner accentuates their vulnerability.

86. Jn 1:10-11.

They are, like Jesus of Nazareth, the most helpless marginalized members of society!

Jesus of Nazareth was the archetypal rejected person. Even though Jesus spent his ministry reaching out to the last, least, lost, and lonely people of his time who were invisible and therefore excluded, many Israelites rejected him. Despite the fact that migrant workers sacrifice their adolescence for Taiwan's economic development, many Taiwanese reject them. It's quite ironic!

Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews (Jn 19:19)

It was customary for candidates for crucifixion to have a tablet containing the reason for their execution. Pilate penned "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews" in three languages so that everyone could read it, according to John. It was written in Hebrew so that Jews could understand it, in Latin so that Romans could understand it, and in Greek so that the entire world could gain knowledge of it. Nobody protested or defended on his behalf. Even the member of the twelve he placed at the head of the group denied knowing him. It appeared that everyone had rejected Jesus and joined in his condemnation. Even God appeared to retreat. Jesus died by himself, apparently rejected by all.

However, Jesus did not condemn or reject anyone. What he had to do, he did with compassion and love. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."[87] He forgave everyone. He remained true to his forgiveness teachings. Jesus was a truly free man who would not compromise his teachings under any circumstances. He could have severed ties with everyone, but he did not. As one of his qualities, he always loves to the very

87. Lk 23:34.

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end. Jewish leaders jeered at him as he hung on the cross, but he remained silent. Jesus willingly laid down his life to save the world; this is evident.

Rejected-Jesus was a symbol of the rejection of Vietnamese labor migrant workers in Taiwan, who are also rejected due to their race. Fabio Baggio notes that enforcement policies "have revealed disturbing manifestations of xenophobia and racism, raising questions about the international community's commitment to building a 'global village' capable of appreciating differences and celebrating the unity of humanity."[88] However, what the world rejects, God chooses as His own.[89] Actually, throughout Scripture, God chooses the rejected as His own. We see how God seeks solidarity and union with all who are thrown away. Pope Francis denounces a culture of disposability in which even human lives are considered expendable. He also cited the dangers of this culture in relation to immigration, stating, "A change of attitude toward migrants and refugees is required on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization – all typical of a throwaway culture – and toward attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of constructing a better, more just, and fraternal world."[90] God demonstrates His love, mercy, concern, and omnipotence with, within, and through them. As His agents, He chooses the rejected and marginalized. Jesus says in the book of Matthew, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of

88. Fabio Baggio, C.S., "Introduction," in *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, eds. Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2008), vii–xx.

89. Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*, 91.

90 .Cf. Pope Francis, *Papal Messages for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, Messages, accessed Oct. 20, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20150912_world-migrants-day-2016.html.

these least brothers of mine, you did for me."[91] Consequently, we acknowledge our kinship with migrant workers and do not separate ourselves from them or from what God desires of us.

The Triumphant Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God

The fact that Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God, became human, died, was resurrected, and appeared to many people is beyond the scope of scientific and historical investigation, as is His ultimate validity. This is the cornerstone of our Christian faith. He was resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit. This newly discovered joy is so great, so extraordinary, and so evident that it cannot be concealed. It had to be made public. Mary immediately reported to Peter and the others that she had witnessed the Lord. The apostles and early Christians understood that they were obligated to share the good news that they had personally experienced. Joy and its source need to be shared. The source of their joy was Jesus of Nazareth, who "...killed, using lawless men to crucify. But God raised him up..."[92]

The disciples' joy at Jesus' resurrection marked the beginning of their quest to discover the ultimate significance of His life and teachings. When they attempted to witness to Him without hesitation, they felt His presence. Multiple times, they claimed to have seen Jesus physically alive. After observing his crucifixion and spearing, they engaged in lengthy conversations and shared meals with him. When told not to speak about the resurrection of Jesus, they replied, "It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard."[93] Eventually,

91. Mt 25:40.

92. Act 2:23-24.

93. Act 4:20.

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these disciples risked their lives to proclaim what they were certain of: Jesus' resurrection from the dead.[94]

According to Virgilio Elizondo, in the book of "Galilean Journey: The Mexican – American Promise": "...the revolution aspects of Christianity was...the new hero who in the power of the Lord...now strong enough to give life."[95] This hero is now the symbol of migrant workers who use their weakness in the eyes of conventional wisdom to challenge their system of injustice.[96] The world's weapons are useless against them. Even in death, they radiated an inner peace and joy that worldly wisdom had never been able to accomplish.[97]

The happiness of the disciples represents the contentment of the Vietnamese labor migrants regarding their offering. They migrate to Taiwan in search of a better life and to provide for their children back home. They come here to assist their spouse in amassing sufficient funds to build a house so that they can provide shelter. Consequently, they come here for a win-win situation. Everyone within the service circle possesses this happiness. Taiwan is ecstatic about its flourishing economy and cultural exchange. The Vietnamese migrant workers delight in the remittances they send home.

Conclusion

When Moses asked God his name so he could tell the Israelites who had sent him (Ex 3:12-13), God replied that His

94. cf. 1 Cor 15:20.

95. Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*, 116.

96. Cf. Ibid, 117.

97 Cf. Ibid, 118.

name is "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh" (I am who I am).[98] (Ex 3, 14) John I. Durham states, "Moses is not given a name. It is an assertion of authority and an admission of a fundamental truth." What are the facts? Reality is the reality of "Always Is or Am" This interpretation demonstrates that, according to Miguel H. Diaz, "God's name is a promise of physical presence." Specifically, according to John Courtney Murray, "the revelation of God's name conveys God's promise to migrate toward God's people at all times." God would be present prior to the Israelites' arrival. He went before them to protect, nurture, and direct them. He is constantly in motion with His people.

God's constant movement alongside His people is exemplified by the Son, Jesus. In his role as God's servant, the Son accepts his burden, even though it will lead to his death. However, according to Ellacuria, the servant has triumphed because "he sacrifices his life for the sake of others"[99] and it is for this reason that "he shall be raised and greatly exalted" (Is. 52:13).

Ellacuria continues: "We gain life when we surrender it to others."[100] Ellacuria asserts that God supports the oppressed and opposes the oppressor (which is in itself good news). In light of the aforementioned considerations, it is clear that the promise applicable to Moses and the Israelites is also applicable to Vietnamese migrant workers in Taiwan today. God accompanies them physically and gives His life for them. This enables us to view God as *Deus Migrator*. Taiwanese Christians are called to

98. Walter Houston, "Exodus," *The Oxford Bible Commentary,* eds. John Barton and John Muddiman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 70-71.

99. Ignacio Ellacuria, "The Crucified People," *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theory*, eds. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria (New York: Orbis Book, 1996), 592–598.

100. Ibid., 395.

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approach the ecology of Faith[101], which calls them to be open, welcoming, and compassionate. Certainly, the Bible provides a collection of emigrational tales that comprise the human condition. If the God of Israel had previously commanded his people to flee to the "Promised Land," He now commands His displaced "people" to move to a place where they can find refuge and live a decent life. Let us now examine what the Catholic Social Teaching reveals about labor migrant workers.

"Go and Do Likewise" (Luke 10:35)

Jesus' command to his disciples to "go and do likewise" (Luke 10:35) has echoed throughout Christian tradition, and his statement "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:31-46) remains the passage of Scripture most frequently cited by Christian hospitality practitioners. *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, on the other hand, acknowledges that "the challenge we face in migration today is not an easy one, as many different spheres are involved: economics, sociology, politics, health, culture, and security."[102] In spite of this, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants emphasizes that "All Christians must respond to this challenge because it is not simply a matter of good will or charismatic individuals,"[103] and "Christians are called to demonstrate and practice not only a spirit of tolerance, but also respect for the identity of the other."[104]

In the final statement of the 1974 Plenary Assembly, in the section titled "The Local Church: In Dialogue with the People, Especially the Poor," the FABC also acknowledged the

101. Snyder, *Asylum-Seeking, Migration and Church,* 163.

102. *EMCC*, no.3.

103. Ibid., no. 3.

104 Ibid., no.9.

widespread poverty in Asian nations. The concrete call of the Plenary is to live in solidarity with suffering humanity and to work for liberation from all that oppresses human life and degrades creation.[105] At Plenary Assembly VII, the FABC discussed in detail the evolution of its approach to issues, including migration, in light of its experience teaching on social issues. The federation had become more conscious of the need to think and act holistically in accordance with our Mission of Love and Service.[106]

Pope Francis brought his concern about migrations to the Catholic Pastoral Center in an effort to transform the existing perspective. He demands that "an attitude of defense and fear, indifference or marginalization, which ultimately corresponds precisely to the culture of discarding, can be transformed into an attitude that has at its core a culture of encounter, the only attitude capable of constructing a more just and brotherly world, a better world."[107] Therefore, in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, he promotes a "culture of encounter" rather than a "globalization of indifference"[108] which he used in Lampedusa. Pope Francis used the phrase "globalization of indifference" asking people for more solidarity with the excluded by employing the

105. Vimal Tirimanna, CSsR., ed., *Fifty Years of Asian Pastoral Guidance* (Yannawa: Hemmarus Prepress, 2020), no. 19-24.

106. FABC, "*Final Statement of the Seventh Plenary Assembly of the FABC*," part 3, no. 8, accessed Oct. 21, 2022, https://secureserver-cdn.net/160.153.138.42/djk.047.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/VII-AsIPA-GA-Publication-2015.pdf.

107. Pope Francis, "Mexico/Holy See Colloquium On Migration And Development," *Migrants/Refugees*, (2014), accessed Oct. 22, 2022, https://migrants-refugees.va/mr_article/message-pope-francis-occasion-mexico-holy-see-colloquium-migration-development/ .

108. Cf. Pope Francis, *Holy Mass on the Anniversary of the Visit to Lampedusa, Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis*, Homilies, 2020, accessed Oct. 22, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200708_omelia-anniversariovisita-lampedusa.html.

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verb "encounter" 44 times. Migration, according to the Pope, provides the church with an opportunity to demonstrate its universality and motherhood, *i.e.*, as a community that is not divided by international borders and cares for all people. As we saw in chapters three and four of this *tesina*, this identity has a significant missionary component as a result of the encyclical, the joy of brotherly friendship, which becomes an appeal to societies not to allow fear to lead to the exclusion of migrants.

How do we build "bridges instead of walls"[109] which Pope Francis often mentions, to foster our relations with foreigners and strangers and create the culture of encounter instead of the culture of fear of exclusion and rejection? How do we promote justice for Vietnamese labor migrant workers? Pope Francis in *FT* mentions the 4 verbs[110]: to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate. These four verbs serve as a compass for providing pastoral care to migrants. In fact, by executing these four verbs when we encounter migrants in our daily lives, we can express a very practical act of hospitality towards them.

To Welcome

Welcoming the stranger is thus intrinsic to the nature of the Church itself and bears witness to its fidelity to the gospel.[111] Pope Francis used to ask local churches to host those migrants, give them a sanctuary, a home to satisfy their thirst for

109. Cf. Gerard O'Connell, "Pope Francis: Build Bridges, not Walls," *America The Jesuit Review* (2019), accessed Sept. 10, 2022, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2019/03/31/pope-francis-build-bridges-not-walls.

110. Cf. *FT*, chapter 4.

111. *EMCC*, no. 22.

"homing desire."[112] In reality, "home desire" is the migrants' primary desire to live in a foreign country. Catherine LaGugna in the book "Re-enchanting the Earth" states, "A person is thus not an individual but an open and ecstatic reality, referred to others for his or her existence. The actualization of personhood takes place in self-transcendence, the movement of freedom toward communion with other persons."[113] Therefore, churches in Taiwan can offer them a suitable sanctuary. In each parish, individuals are invited not only to join the church but also to create their own church, their own community where they can feel at home. Indeed, local churches in Taiwan are invited to become migrants' own "family where all kinds of cultures or people, races, etc. can be hosted."[114]

Local churches in Taiwan can also serve as a meeting place for people in similar circumstances, e.g., the provision of advice, activities, and excursions, and participation in festivities. In reality, justice as an option for the poor/migrants must be constructed and comprehended within the context of love. The embodiment of justice is love. It is neither a pleasant feeling nor a romantic bond. Love is a mode of worldly existence. Justice is the moral act of love. Actually, justice equals love. Evil exists where neither moral acts of love nor justice exist. Evil is the act of malice or wrongdoing. It is the commission of a moral wrong, specifically the severing of a relational

112. Stephanie Kirchgaessner, "Vatican to take in two refugee families as Pope calls for 'every religion' to help ," *The Guardian*, 2015, accessed Oct. 25, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/06/pope-francis-calls-on-catholics-to-take-in-refugee-families.

113. Cf. Ilia Delio, *Re-Enchanting the Earth: Why AI Needs Religion* (New York: Orbis Books, 2020), 27.

114. Cf. Emmanuel S. de Guzman, "The Church as "Imagined Communities" Among Differentiated Social Bodies," *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, eds. Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 118-154.

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bond in a manner that renders one, both, or multiple parties incapable of growing, loving, or living.[115]

To Protect

The dwelling is a safe haven for its occupants. As a home and family for migrants, Taiwanese churches can become hospitable, familial communities. It is now a location that can accommodate mixed and permeated cultural conditions. It creates a community in which members' differences are respected and accepted. It is a place where people from diverse backgrounds can peacefully coexist. Now, the small, foreign, and disadvantaged community feels at home. Maintaining their own traditions, adjusting without assimilation, and living "beyond" status in a foreign country are presently ways for migrants to endure hardships in the hope of returning home. Members of the same religion fortify their identity and acknowledge their contribution to the economy, culture, and society of the receiving nation. On their journey back to their homes, where their families are waiting, the migrants feel safe and at home.

Churches, dioceses, and men's and women's congregations in Taiwan must also collaborate with churches in their home countries. Clearly, this type of collaboration is very beneficial because the participating churches can effectively reach out to migrants and their families left behind by sharing the necessary information. Many dioceses with ties to migrant workers have currently established migrant desks and other facilities to assist migrant workers. However, in many cases the operational aspect of such local structures is inadequate due to a lack of personnel or funds. Frequently, their effectiveness is contingent on the individual sensitivity of bishops or parish

115. Isabel Carter Heyward, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (New York: University Press of America, 1982), 18.

priests. However, a religious commitment between the sending and hosting churches is necessary. The church can support, among other things, bilateral agreements between Taiwan and Vietnam in the area of recruitment.

In response to the trend of East Asian migrant workers seeking employment in Taiwan, the Taiwanese Church has expanded its provision of social and legal aid, psychological assistance, and housing in special shelters for all foreign workers. Numerous pastoral agents advocate and lobby for the rights of migrants on the front lines. Spirituality is present, although it is often delegated to priests and religious from abroad. Lou Aldrich SJ describes the exploitation of migrant workers in Taiwan and uses CST on labor to critique the situation and suggest solutions.[116] The church must become the voice of the voiceless.[117] The letter argued that the church should provide assistance alongside those meeting the religious and spiritual needs[118] of migrants, refugees, and newcomers including beyond the sacramental services, and regardless of their immigration status. Since then, bishops have solicited financial support from numerous parishes and Catholic organizations

116. Lou Aldrich, "A Critical Evaluation of the Migrant Workers' Situation in Taiwan in Light of the Catholic Social Tradition," *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, eds. Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 49–67.

117. Cf. Proverb 31:1-9.

118. *Erga Migrantes*, Part II, 70: Workers in a Pastoral Care of Communion, 70-80. Understood under the term "workers are the following: Pastoral care takers in the home and host churches of the migrants as Episcopal conferences, National Coordinators for Ethnic Chaplains, Chaplains for Ethnic Communities of immigrants, Parish priests, all pastoral workers, and lay associations involved in the pastoral care of migrants. - "To ensure that the pastoral care of migrants may be one of communion. That is born from an ecclesiology of communion and serving a spirituality of communion, it is essential that the Churches of departure and arrival establish an intense collaboration with one another."

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for the development of networks providing social services to migrants and their families during the period of settlement. "Whenever possible, provide legal services at reasonable prices or for free to those who have been arrested in Taiwan's numerous prisons."[119]

Furthermore, Taiwanese churches must adapt their pastoral care to the increasing feminization of migrant workers. Recently, several case studies and theological reflections have been published, most notably by Gemma Tulud Cruz.[120] She argues that the maintenance of familial relationships and responsibilities is the most significant gendered change for mothers who migrate.[121] Their remittances, gendered roles, and family relationships are the factors that motivate them to migrate to Taiwan for the benefit of their family. According to her, "the patriarchal and romanticized concept of love motivates or compel[s] women to risk their lives overseas or to remain in problematic living and working conditions for the sake of their loved ones."[122] Therefore, it is crucial to place a greater emphasis on the unique experiences and gendered nature of migrant women.

In "Burning Center, Porous Borders," Eleazar S. Fernandez told the story of a Hong Kong domestic worker. "Is it not true, Big sister, that I am similar to a roll of toilet paper in a store?" If I am not purchased, I remain on the shelf; if I am purchased,

119. Regina Fuchs, "Human Trafficking of Legal and Illegal Migrant Workers in Taiwan," *Hope Workers' Center Taiwan*, 2011, accessed Oct. 19, 2022, http://mfasia.org/migrantforumasia/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/fuchs_humantrafficking_feb2011.pdf.

120. Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration*, 35.

121. Ibid., 37-39.

122. Ibid., 47.

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I am consumed and discarded. "I am uncared for..."[123] This is one of the stories in the book about migrant workers. Their lives are so disposable and they are frequently treated as trash. This is the issue that Pope Francis addressed in his explanation of the many facets of the "throwaway" culture, both in and beyond *Laudato Si'*. The Pope considers this issue to be pervasive. Therefore, he requests an investigation into law and policymaking if the "throwaway" culture is eliminated - and what might replace it.

Besides, the churches can become a "just broker" by assisting migrant workers in finding employment with Taiwanese employers, thereby combating systemic injustice. Migrant workers are vulnerable because they must endure not only physical but also mental stress as a result of their jobs and because they reside in a foreign country without family. In Taiwan, migrant workers must rely on brokers as their first helpers, but if these helpers fail in their obligations, "it is the responsibility of the public authority to prevent and punish injury, and to preserve everyone's property."[124]

If the broker plays a significant role in this group of four actors (employers, migrant workers, the government, and brokers), its activities will have a negative impact on the development of the other sections. Employers and migrant workers, two of the most important participants in this employment process, will be impacted the most. Employers, on the other hand, have their own authority, property, residence, and support system in Taiwan, so they can easily find a replacement migrant worker, whereas migrant laborers must always struggle to survive in Taiwan. They could be in debt and defenseless

123. Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Burning Center, Porous Borders* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 207-236.

124. Cf. *RN*, no.37.

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in a foreign country. Therefore, migrant workers suffer the most when brokers fail to meet their obligations.

Initially, employers and employees were required to rely on brokers for recruitment procedures; however, when brokers fail to perform their duties properly, their role is no longer required. Those who perform their responsibilities properly tend to foster harmony between employers and migrant workers. The more a broker adheres to his responsibilities, the more he demonstrates his indispensable role as an intermediary; conversely, the more he goes against his responsibilities, the more he rejects his intermediary role. Therefore, it will eventually be eliminated and stripped of its intermediary function. However, it is necessary to clearly differentiate the intermediary role from that of a broker, as a failing broker cannot destroy the intermediary role's fundamentals. Therefore, if brokers are eliminated, it is necessary to prepare another unit to assume this role in order to prevent additional management issues.

It is true that a broker can be eliminated, but the role of a middleman is essential and must be filled by another unit. Regardless of whether the entity is public or private, it must be subject to strict management by the government and the conscience of the responsible unit.

Otherwise, the private property of migrant workers is still violated. Governments, employers, and migrant workers heavily rely on middlemen. In addition to manual labor, a low-skilled migrant worker[125] has nothing in common with a

125. Hồng Chiêu, "90% lao động đi làm việc nước ngoài có tay nghề thấp," *VnExpress*, 2022, accessed Oct. 20, 2022, https://vnexpress.net/90-lao-dong-di-lam-viec-nuoc-ngoai-co-tay-nghe-thap-4500367.html. (The study from Vietnamese Labor Bureau shows that Vietnamese labor migrant workers in foreign lands are less-skilled laborers).

high-skilled foreign worker, as the latter can contact employers directly and complete the necessary paperwork on their own. Agents must assist migrant workers with the recruitment process and other concerns after their arrival in Taiwan.

In addition, businesses rely on brokers to assist them in locating qualified workers, managing procedures, and overseeing the administration of foreign workers. Employers prefer workers represented by brokers because they can be guaranteed and because they can file complaints with brokers more easily than with government agencies. According to the government, Taiwan's labor force is insufficient to meet the massive demand in the migration industry and the difficulties associated with the influx of a large number of migrant workers. These issues appear to be resolved by both business and government brokers. Brokers are entrusted by governments to act as intermediaries, and it is their duty to mitigate the negative effects of this solution. Despite this, the government must tolerate the grave threat posed by the brokers' deceit, so it disregards their unethical behavior. In other words, the government is reliant on brokerage services to some extent.

RN Center previously handled a case involving a Vietnamese part-time worker who was injured on the job. His legal employer fired him for working illegally, but the Ministry of Labor cannot provide evidence that he worked for an illegal employer. The unlawful employer instructed him to keep his employment a secret and offered to assume responsibility for him.

Unpredictably, the illegal employer reversed course and urged him to sign the excessive compensation agreement while he was still hospitalized. His legal standing in Taiwan was favorable given his circumstances. The Center assisted him in obtaining a free attorney through the Legal Aid Foundation and accompanied him throughout his case. After nearly a year

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of fighting for his rights, the illegal employer agreed to pay six times the compensation he initially requested. Even if this compensation is inadequate for the suffering he must endure, he must accept it. Loss of mental health and incapacity to work are severe consequences of industrial accidents, as victims and their families worry about the future and their loved ones. They will be severely depressed if they lack the strength to overcome obstacles and do not receive family support.

After all, Pope Leo XIII emphasized that on Sundays and certain holy days, individuals should temporarily forget about their jobs, contemplate heaven and eternal life, and worship.

Religion is a potent support for the spiritual lives of employees, particularly those who are far from their home country and face numerous challenges. They can utilize religion as a defense. Therefore, both religious and nonreligious individuals must have a day off so that they can worship, rest, and reflect on their goals, as well as visit friends and family or engage in other activities of their choosing. The benefit of the day off is that it allows them to escape their stressful workplace. "As a general rule, a worker should have leisure and rest proportional to the wear and tear of his strength, since the loss of strength can only be recovered by ceasing to work hard."[126]

To Promote

The Asian Bishops correctly noted that the Church should unite with all those who care about the rights of migrants and their situation, recognizing that the migrants themselves are

126. *RN*, no. 42.

the primary agents of change.[127] Promoting migrants' rights is "a universal aspect of our call to love, a love that transcends all prejudices, all historical and cultural barriers, and all petty interests."[128] To do so, people need to be internal conversion[129] that is because "this new reality based on intercultural relations, in which diversity is not a threat, does not justify power hierarchies of one over the other, but rather dialogue and celebration of difference, interrelationship, and a revival of hope."[130]

Certainly, the concept of building cultural bridges between migrant workers and Taiwanese should be promoted. It takes courage and generosity to confront the differences. Other cultures are not "enemies". As Agnes Brazal says in her exploration, the possibility of speaking of the cultural rights of migrants[131] "cultural rights can be theologically based and understood within a Trinitarian social model of rationality and mutuality, equality in diversity, creativity, and fecundity."[132] The author proposes a Trinitarian social model of equality in diversity and creativity as a fertile theological basis for the right to cultural expression, growth, and identity. "As a community of friends, the Trinity challenges us to be hospitable to 'others' who do not immediately belong in our 'circle,'

127. FABC, "The Final Statement of the Seventh FABC Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, *A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love and Service,*" *For all the Peoples of Asia. Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 2002 to 2006,* Franz-Josef Eilers, S.V.D., ed., vol. 3 (Quezon City: Claretian Publications), 2007, 89.

128. *FT*, nos. 114 – 117.

129. Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration*, 35.

130. Pope Benedict XVI, "Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to The Bishops of Latin America And The Caribbean," 2007, no. 97, accessed 25/10/2022, https://www.celam.org/aparecida/Ingles.pdf.

131. Cf. Brazal, "Cultural Rights of Migrants, 88-110.

132. Ibid., 104.

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such as migrants and refugees. Furthermore, mutuality within the Trinity requires that we recognize the economic, cultural, and social contributions of migrants.[133]

Indeed, she encourages a respectful attitude toward cultural rights in her essay. According to her, once a person can express a respectful attitude toward different cultures, his or her attitude demonstrates the Trinitarian unity of self and others. She provides a framework for respecting the cultures of migrants while allaying fears of permanent migrant enclaves or ghettos by extending the duty of hospitality. Whereas the new migrant typically possesses less social, economic, and political capital while living in "a betwixt and between" situation, Agnes Brazal highlights the creativity that results from such tension and the obligation that a right to cultural expression imposes (e.g., antiracism policies beyond benign neglect).

Agnes Brazal also notes that the theological foundation for human rights is our inherent dignity as persons created in the image and likeness of a triune and relational, diverse, and unique God.[134] She investigates how these characteristics impact migrants' cultural rights. As manifestations of the Holy Trinity, we are social rather than solitary beings. Interaction and discourse with others shape our identities and cultural practices. The manner in which others perceive and respond to us influences our sense of self. Brazal prefers an image of the Trinity as a community of friends, which "challenges us to be hospitable to 'others' who initially do not belong to our 'circle' as migrants and refugees."[135]

In addition, "mutuality in the Trinity requires us to acknowledge the gifts migrants bring—their contribution to

133. Ibid., 68–92.

134. Ibid., 82.

135. Ibid., 84.

economic development and their cultural capital—and to work toward social reforms that would grant them greater access to economic capital."[136] The relationships within the Trinity serve as a model for relationships between those who are both similar (in essence) and dissimilar (distinct persons). Respect for cultural rights exemplifies this triangular relationship by embracing the stranger, migrant, and alien.[137] She asserts that all living things are inherently creative and procreative because the Trinity is characterized by creativity and procreation. Thus, "the right to cultural expression, development, and identity allows us to actualize this imprint of the Trinity within us," and, as in the Trinity, "cultural creativity and fecundity will result from a process of dynamic communion and interdependence, mutual relations with peoples of other cultures, including that of the migrants."[138]

It is needed to mention Pope Paul VI who called to mind the task of the Church with respect to non-Christian migrants, underlining that by settling down, they create new occasions for contacts and cultural exchanges.[139] The parish represents the space in which a true pedagogy of meeting with people of various religious convictions and cultures can be realized. In its various expressions, the parish community can become a training ground of hospitality, a place where an exchange of experiences and gifts takes place.[140] The parish is a privileged expression of community[141] Priests, called to be ministers of

136. Ibid., 84.

137. Ibid., 84-85.

138. Ibid., 86.

139. Message for the 87th World Migration Day, 2001, no. 6.

140. Ibid., 2002, no. 3.

141. Message for the 85th World Migration Day, 1999, no. 6.

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unity in the parish community.[142] Tolerance in this scenario is not enough; sympathy and respect[143] are required in all possible ways, especially in reference to cultural identity. This is the reason why dialogue, listening, trust, and empathy are needed.

To Integrate

On World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2015, Pope Francis declared, "The Church without borders, Mother to all."[144] This statement encourages Christians to spread a culture of acceptance and solidarity throughout the world because they have the "right to be assisted in integrating into a new country."[145] The Pope stated:

> The Church is a pioneer in the globalization of charity and solidarity. The Church are all called to the sublime mission of collaborating, as the Churches of origin, transit, and destination of people who are compelled to move, in order for them to feel welcomed, protected, promoted, and to have a solid foundation for proper integration. At a time when various forms of fundamentalist intolerance are damaging relationships between individuals, groups and peoples, let us be committed to living and teaching the value of respect for others, a love capable of welcoming differences.[146]

In *FT*, the Pope said:

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142. Ibid.

143. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis uses the word "respect" 58 times.

144. Cf. Jamie Orillion, "Pope Francis' message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees: 'A Church without frontiers, mother to all,'" *Global*, 2014, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, https://stjoerayne.org/2014/09/23/pope-francis-message-for-world-day-of-migrants-and-refugees-a-church-without-frontiers-mother-to-all/.

145. *GS*, no. 84.

146. Cf. Message for the 85th World Migration Day, 1999, no. 5.

> The priority of the dignity of every human being over his or her ideas, opinions, practices and even sins. Even as forms of fanaticism, closed-mindedness and social and cultural fragmentation proliferate in present-day society, a good politician will take the first step and insist that different voices be heard. Disagreements may well give rise to conflicts, but uniformity proves stifling and leads to cultural decay. May we not be content with being enclosed in one fragment of reality.[147]

Migrant workers, regardless of who they are, what religion they practice, or what they do, are created in the image of God. In order to encourage migrant workers to combine their own culture with Taiwanese culture, it is necessary to take steps toward social integration, such as enrolling in Chinese language classes through a church-affiliated group. Precautions must be taken and workplace laws and regulations must be followed to prevent excessive differentiation.[148] In addition, the "Instruction on the Pastoral Care of Migrating People" states, "Migrants bear witness to and promote the unity of the human family, and confirm that communion of brotherhood among peoples in which each participant is simultaneously a giver and a receiver.[149] Certainly, we are commanded to love them with a love that "integrates and unites."[150]

In addition, according to *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, Christian migrants "must be the principal protagonists of pastoral care."[151] Before the establishment and development

147. *FT*, no. 191.

148. Message for World Migration Day, 2005, no. 1.

149. Cf. *De Pastorali Migratorum Cura*, "On the Pastoral Care of People who Migrate Sacred Congregation for Bishops," 1969, no. 2, accessed Oct. 14, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/la/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19690815_pastoralis-migratorum-cura.html.

150. *FT*, no. 190-192.

151. *EMCC*, no. 91.

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of ecclesiastical structures for migrant ministry, migrants were already actively engaged in pastoral ministry among their fellow migrants. They look for members of their religious denomination and people of the same linguistic-ethnic background in the host country so that they can continue to nourish their religious tradition, which gives them a sense of security and purpose in a foreign land. Numerous instances exist of migrant workers in Taiwan organizing Christian worshipping communities and inviting priests from their home countries to join them in order to receive the sacraments. Migration benefits individuals, families, economies, cultures, relationships, and societies.

However, these benefits are accompanied by a number of disadvantages, including uprooting, isolation, and social marginalization, which result in numerous psychological and emotional issues, such as feelings of stress, loneliness, and meaninglessness. In Taiwan, immigrant Catholic communities are formed and shaped by their respective rural societies and cultures, which instilled in them a fundamental sense of belonging and unity with others.

General Conclusion

As Christians, we must increase our understanding of the workings of the Word and the miracles of the Holy Spirit in people's lives in light of prejudices. We believe that humans are created in God's image. Therefore, we are obligated to help our migrant brothers and sisters.

Humanity is exemplified by the hospitality shown to others. As a person with a calling to love, extending our hands to those in need comes naturally. For this to occur peacefully and justly, many people's attitudes must change, and the Church's role and presence in this process are essential. However, we must

go beyond this calling, loving as Christ instructs: "whatever you did for one of my least brothers, you did for me" (Mt 25, 40). When we extend our hospitality to the least by welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating them, it is not because they are pathetic, but because they are the image of Christ. Our Lord asks us to carry the cross and daily follow him (cf. Mt. 16, 24-26). Certainly, the cross that we bear is also the cross of the migrant workers. When we actually carry or assist others in carrying their "cross," we obey the Lord's command. Christians and other people of good will can be mustard seeds in these regions if the appropriate conditions are created.

In the context of Asia, for the Church in Asia to be relevant to its life and mission, it must engage in the process of a Triple dialogue: a dialogue with the poor, people of other religions, and their cultures.[152] By welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating them into the foreign land, the church is carrying out the triple dialogue. Let us use the poem written by Bishop Romero to honor the valor and sacrifice of Vietnamese migrant workers in Taiwan and to wish them well in their new home.

152. Cf. FABC, "Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees: A New Way of Being Church's Study Days on Undocumented Migrants and Refugees," *For all the Peoples of Asia. Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 2002 to 2006*, vol. 4, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers, S.V.D. (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2007), 89.

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The Violence of Love

How beautiful will be the day when all the baptized understand
that their work, their job, is a priestly work,
that just as I celebrate Mass at this altar,
so each carpenter celebrates Mass at his workbench and each metalworker, each professional,
each doctor with the scalpel, the market woman at her stand,
is performing a priestly office!
How many cabdrivers, I know, listen to this message there in their cabs;
you are a priest at the wheel, my friend, if you work with honesty,
consecrating that taxi of yours to God, bearing a message of peace and love
to the passengers who ride in your cab.

(St. Oscar Romero, The Violence of Love, November 20, 1977)